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Father Says CIA Nominee Surprised by Carter Call

By BOB GIBSON
of The Progress Staff

When President Carter dipped into the ranks of the military Monday to name the man almost certain to become the next director of the Central Intelligence Agency, he chose the captain of the brigade of midshipmen from his class at the Naval Academy and a Rhodes Scholar.

Admiral Stansfield Turner, the commander-in-chief of Allied Forces in Southern Europe, didn't know Jimmy Carter at Annapolis where the two were members of the class of '47, according to the nominee's father, Albemarle resident Oliver S. Turner.

The two first met in 1973 when the admiral, then president of the Naval War College at Newport, R.I., invited the then governor of Georgia to speak at the college.

Turner, who instituted major revisions in the college's curriculum to strengthen its academic content, made a practice of asking outside speakers such as Carter and author and Vietnam war critic David Halberstam to address the school's military officer students.

"He turned the curriculum upside down in an attempt to academize the college," the admiral's father said. "The problem with the Navy, as well as all the services, is a lack of innovation."

The elder Turner, an immigrant from England at age eight, retired from the commercial real estate business in Illinois and moved to Albemarle eight years ago.

In 1974, he recalled, his son was appointed commander of the Second Fleet and met Carter a second time while visiting Atlanta. The two talked for half an hour and the governor mentioned his just formulated plans to seek the presidency.

One year later, Turner became the Navy's youngest four star admiral and assumed his NATO command in Naples while Carter was beginning to set foot in the snows of New Hampshire and Iowa.

The news that the admiral had been tapped as Carter's choice for the nation's top intelligence post came as a surprise to him and his family last week.

The admiral received a call on a scrambler phone Wednesday from Defense Secretary Harold Brown who summoned him to Washington for a meeting with Carter. Knowing the meaning of such a call, Turner said his son thought he might be in line for a higher Pentagon post as he flew across the Atlantic.

"He was expecting Chief of Naval Operations or chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," his father said, "since (current

Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. George) Brown had made a few faux pas" and Navy scuttlebutt had him pegged for the top military position. "He didn't know until he was in the Oval Office."

The President questioned him about his finances and informed him that all his stocks would have to be placed in a blind trust, according to the father.

Vice President Walter Mondale, who attended the meeting, then started lining up votes in the Senate for his confirmation, the nominee's father said, "and I don't think there's the slightest doubt he will be confirmed."

Turner, a Christian Scientist who neither drinks nor smokes, possesses a list of academic credentials as long as his service record.

Valedictorian of his high school class in Highland Park, Ill., he was awarded top honors in his last year at Amherst College and graduated 25th out of 820 at Annapolis, 34 places ahead of Carter.

His graduate work included a degree in philosophy, political science and economics at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar and the Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program.

He lettered in football at Annapolis and played in three Army-Navy games as a midshipman.

"He's a military man who's an intellectual," his father said. "I think he's more innovative and less traditional and not hidebound" compared to most high ranking officers.

While in the Navy, he saw the world many times over. His trips included an expedition to the South Pole with William F. Buckley and flights "over every mile of the Soviet border with the NATO countries," his father said, "to see where the Russians might come in."

His previous military experience included a sea command in Vietnam waters during the war and command of a carrier task group in the Mediterranean in 1970 and 1971 during a period marked by massive Soviet naval expansion into that region.

If confirmed, he will become the fifth military officer to head the CIA since its inception in 1946. In his NATO command, "Half of his work has been diplomatic and half of it military," according to his father.

"This is going to be a sacrifice for him," he added. "He's leaving one of the nicest jobs in the Navy...for an arduous job."

His father feels the scholarly admiral is ready for the task of becoming the president's top intelligence gatherer. "He will see the president more than the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" — the position he expected when called across the Atlantic on an hour's notice.

continued



Progress Photo by Jim Carpenter

ALBEMARLE RESIDENTS WILHELMINA AND OLIVER TURNER, PARENTS OF CIA NOMINEE

Parents Were "Utterly Surprised and Delighted" Adm. Stansfield Turner Named by Carter